

Bill 948: An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut

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Testimony from Stefanie Hill

Previous Hartford teacher, current tax payer and parent in Deep River

I unequivocally support Bill 948 by the Education Committee. The fact that such a large portion of school funding is based on local property taxes is not only unequal but inequitable. When we allow our state to invest less money in the education of marginalized students, it is placing less value on their futures. In addition, when evaluating for an equitable distribution of resources, our state allows an even larger gap. This disparity is highlighted year after year as Connecticut continues to have one of the highest opportunity gaps in the nation. For a state that holds some students to the highest standards in educational attainment, how can we allow countless others to fall victim to the school-to-prison pipeline? As a teacher, I know the solutions are far from simple, however an absolutely essential step in narrowing the gap in our state is through making funding more equitable.

During the six years I taught in Hartford public schools, there were constant budget constraints that directly impacted learning. From having three years in a row receiving zero requested (modest in cost) supplies as a science teacher, to not having basic technology - it was clear suburban schools have an advantage in these basic areas. Still, more important than supplies or the fact that the school building was outdated, there wasn't enough staff to truly meet students' needs. In a school with over 300 students there was one counselor, one social worker, and a part time psychologist. At these ratios, they were unable to provide essential services to the majority of students with their limited time.

As a parent with children at a regional rural school, I have seen the contrast in resources first hand. I am glad to see our tax dollars used towards my children receiving a quality public education. At the same time as a constituent of Connecticut, I also want to see our tax dollars used towards providing the same quality education for all children. Our tax dollars should be used equitably to fund schools in the state so that all students- regardless of race, family socioeconomic status, or region- have the opportunities we promise as the fundamental basis of public education.

I strongly support Bill 948 because all students in our state's futures' matter.
Thank you for your time.

Stefanie Hill